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HOW THE SITE OF CARLISLE, CUMBERLAND COUNTY, PENNA., WAS PURCHASED.

[Letter of Thomas Cookson to Thomas Penn, in "Penn Papers," Library of The Historical Society of Pennsylvania.]

HONOURD SIR

On fixing the Seat of the Town of Carlisle at Letorts Spring, I furnished the Governor with a draught of the Lands purchased to be transmitted to your Honour. I doubt not but most of them woud appear high rated, as indeed they are, which may render it necessary for me to mention the Reasons I purchased at such rates, After the Governor had been well informed of the Conveniences of the different Situations in the County of Cumberland proposed for a County Town, and had determined to fix it at Letorts Spring, I then received my directions to purchase two or three Plantations upon the Spring for the seat of the Town, having surveyd two pretty good Tracts near it, for Timber Out Lots or such other Accommodations as you shoud think fit to apply them and accordingly with all the Privacy and Dispatch imaginable I endeavoured to get the Purchases made before it was made publick, I took a Ride to the Place and bought Patrick Davison's & William Davison's Plantations which are very good ones and most convenient for the centre of the Town, I then bought James Gilcores and wanted the Plantation late Peter Wilkies, when I enquired about that, I found that Peter Wilkie had made a Will and had left that Plantation for the maintenance of his wife and children during her widowhood To be sold nevertheless on her marriage This put a stop for a time to our Proceedings I acquainted the Governor with the difficulties thrown in our Way and on shewing him a Draught of the Lands purchased and of the adjacent Plantations He resolved not to proceed to fix the Town there unless this Tract of Wilkies

that of John M^c^Clare's and the others since purchased could be got for your Honour looking upon them as Plantations, that in time, if in other Hands, woud interfere with the most advantageous Part of your Scheme, as he has found in his late Purchases about the Town of Lancaster, being obliged to give five times the money he might have had them for ten or twelve years ago, Upon this I immedeately returnd to Letorts to endeavour to make all the Purchases thought necessary, The Widow Wilkie was about to marry, and I treated with the Executors about the price, these were very high, as were the others I acquainted Mr Peters with the large Demands made for these Plantations, as I imagined you woud think them very extravagant in that Part of the Country, but cheaper I could not get them, the Country were waiting for a Town to be laid out, and the Governor thought it would be for your Interest to have those Lands even at the rates they insisted on rather than leave them in their Possessions, thus they were purchased as speedily and as cheap as was in my Power, I have now sent another copy of the Draught of those Lands wherein I have marked the centre of the town and the names of the persons from whom the several Plantations were purchased and the Prices I have also noted a Part convenient for Out Lots, I mentioned the Letting them on Leases for Lives, but the People at present settled there coud not be brought to think of any other tenure than a Fee Simple and were of the Rents first settled at Lancaster viz 7/ sterl for 5 acres, However they will think much to give above ten or twelve shill sterl, at the most, Mr Peters by me promised the Settlers out Lots, but no terms were agreed upon, I therefore desired Mr Armstrong the Deputy Surveyor there to measure out 20 or 30 Out Lots, and to be very particular in noting the Quality of each as to Soil Timber &c and to send down the draught of them to Mr, Peters that some mode of granting or letting them shoud be agreed upon, and the first adventurers in the Town accommodated which will much encourage others, The Tavernkeepers in Town are kept

easy at present by having the Meadow Ground on the Spring rented out amongst them, the Town is improving as much as can well be expected, and I hope by the fall you will have a further agreeable account altho they are far short of the Town of Reading which has rose up most surprizingly, I am sorry we had not the Plan of the Centre Square in time I think it a very beautiful one But we coud none of us hit upon it and the Town having been long kept back the Governor directed Mr Scull to form the Plan upon your letter as near your design as he coud which was done, and carried into Execution, I have sent also copies of the Draughts of the other Surveys made for your Family on the West Side Sasquehannah, The Settlement of Marsh Creek to be surveyed into a manor called Maske is filled with a set of People of the same Temper and Principles with the first settlers of it who are mostly removed and who had opposed the surveying that Land for the use of your Family, The Secretary and Surveyor General with some Magistrates were up to attempt it but in vain, during the late War and since, the Province has been in Broils, and the People readier to join with such Rioters, than to assist the officers of Justice to suppress them, for that whole settlement has been brought in at the time of an Election with the popular cry and no one would or durst touch them, tho' Out Lawries against some of them, therefore I think it will be better to wait for a more favourable opportunity in such extraordinary cases as these when there may be a better Prospect of carrying into execution any design of either removing or laying Terms on them. The Town of York is well improved several good Houses of Brick or Stone built within these two years I shall take an account from Mr, Stevenson of the present State of it and transmit it with the Plan by the next opportunity. Mr. Lardner mentioned to me your inclination to ease him of the trouble of receiving your Quit Rents in the Counties of York and Cumberland and that you should be willing that I should receive those Rents and yearly account to him or the Receiver General for the time

being, I desired him to return your Honour my Thanks for his Confidence and good Opinion and that I should undertake anything within my capacity for your Service when he shall think fit to put me into some method for entering upon the Business, Theres a good deal of Arrears of Rent due in York, the Terms the Lots were taken up first were to have 'em two years Rent free, I must also beg leave to return my thanks for the honour you did me in naming me one of your Commissioners for running the lines, I should be well pleased to have been serviceable on the occasion

I am
Hon^{d} Sir
Y^{r} Honours
Most obed^{t} Servt
THO: COOKSON

LANCASTER
8th June 1752